

### *Veteran Employment Legislation One Step Closer to House Vote*

Washington, DC – Harry Teague announced today that his bill to promote employment opportunities for veterans was approved by the House Veterans Affairs Committee, moving it forward to be considered by the full House of Representatives. The VetStar Veterans Friendly Business Act of 2010, aimed at encouraging businesses to hire more veterans nationwide, creates an award program to recognize businesses that hire and employ those who have honorably served our country.

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“Today’s passage of the VetStar Bill through the House Veterans Affairs Committee is a critical step in moving this legislation forward to a vote on the House floor,” said Harry Teague. “My bill aims to highlight the importance of helping veterans find jobs while at the same time celebrating those businesses that actively reach out to our veteran community. As our nation’s soldiers return from combat, it is only right that we assist them in their transition back to civilian life and provide opportunities for them to re-enter the workforce, and this bill will achieve that by recognizing many deserving business owners in our communities.”

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Teague’s bill directs the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop a low-cost, annual awards program at the federal level to recognize businesses that place an emphasis on hiring veterans on a regular basis. This is designed to create an incentive for businesses to hire more veterans, and increase opportunities for veterans to gain employment in their communities. In addition, it is meant to make a positive impact on the businesses recognized, by providing them with an opportunity to improve their reputation with veterans and increase their level of business in the community. The awards program, to be administered and overseen by the VA, will present businesses with official certificates of recognition for their hiring practices, and has the goal of encouraging states to develop similar programs locally.

In today's economic environment, it is more essential than ever before that businesses place an emphasis on hiring and employing returning veterans. According to the Department of Labor, when the national unemployment rate hit 9.3% last year, veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars were unemployed at a rate of 10.2%.

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